DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 049 PS 021 234

AUTHOR Blank, Susan
TITLE Jobs as a Two Generation Program.
PUB DATE 18 Sep 92
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the National Black Child Development Institute Conference (21st, Washington, DC, September 18, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Health; Childhood Needs; Day Care; Family Life; *Family Programs; *Federal Aid; *Federal Programs; Intervention; *Low Income Groups; *Program Effectiveness; Welfare Recipients; Welfare Services; Young Children
IDENTIFIERS Case Management; *Family Support Act 1988; Integrated Services; *Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program; Welfare Reform; Welfare to Work Programs

ABSTRACT

Most discussions of welfare reform ignore two factors: its effect on children; and the fact that a welfare reform law, the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA), already exists. FSA created state Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) welfare-to-work programs, and if the JOBS program is adequately funded, it can improve the lives of welfare families. The Foundation for Child Development has been interested in FSA and its JOBS programs, and in early 1992 published a report, "Pathways to Self-Sufficiency," which advocates two-generation intervention, simultaneously providing welfare-to-work services for parents and supports to help children grow up healthy and ready to learn. An ideal two-generation intervention would have six elements: assessment of child and family needs; high quality child care and early childhood education; services to support parenting; preventive health care; education and training services leading to employment at a living wage; and family case management. In many ways, a JOBS welfare-to-work program can serve as a jumping-off point for helping families obtain this package of services. If child advocates become familiar with their local JOBS programs, they can help them identify and facilitate opportunities to help children and families. (MM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED356049

JOBS AS A TWO GENERATION PROGRAM

Given by Susan Blank
Foundation For Child Development
September 18, 1992

National Black Child Development's 22nd Annual Conference

"Our Children: Miles to Go, Promises to Keep"

September 17-19

Washington, D.C.

PS 021234

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Susan Blank

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Thank you. I attended part of the NBCDI conference two years ago and was really lifted up by the spirit of participants so it's a pleasure to be back. As I looked over the program for today and tomorrow, I was struck by the variety of workshop topics, but if this conference is like many others on children and families, I bet that one unifying theme that will emerge is the importance of coordinating the considerable resources spent by our large public agencies and systems so that they can do a better job of responding to the needs of kids. Today, I'd like us to be thinking about one large system that has a mission of supporting vulnerable children, but that is usually talked about in terms of its effects on adults, and that's the welfare system. Welfare has been in the headlines a lot recently; there's always a simmering debate about what to do about welfare, but it's heated up, with states proposing new ideas for penalties, occasionally incentives, and outright benefit cuts in the welfare system. There's been a lot of discussion, but it seems to me that two topics have been conspicuous by their absence: First, as I've suggested, kids have been missing -- by and large the discussion has been about welfare mothers and how this or that change will affect their behavior. Second, the talk about reforming welfare has pretty much ignored the fact that the country does have a welfare reform law on the books, and that's the Family Support Act of 1988, or FSA, as it's called. FSA created state JOBS welfare-to-work programs, programs that require welfare recipients to work or take part in education or training in exchange for benefits. FSA is far from a piece of

perfect legislation, but as I'm going to suggest today, it does have a great deal of potential to make a difference for welfare families and their kids if only rather than rushing ahead to the next fashion in welfare reform, we pay attention to the JOBS program, fund it adequately, and use it well. So what I'm going to do is talk about just what this law can mean for children and then turn the session over to Susan Clark and Willa Webb, who will illustrate the general points I'll make by describing how the Philadelphia JOBS program is breaking new ground by joining with the Head Start system to enrich the way in which both programs work with welfare families. Then if there's time, I'd like to ask you to join in a group exercise that may help us all think more about what it takes to use the JOBS program to help kids and families.

Let me pause here to ask how many people are familiar with the JOBS program. Just to give a quick overview: State welfare-to-work programs have been around a long time, but thanks to the Family Support Act, many of the new JOBS welfare-to-work programs are considerably different than their predecessors. First of all, even though the dollars aren't nearly all they could be, the pot of available federal funds for these programs is considerably bigger than it used to be before FSA was passed. Also, the newer JOBS programs have the potential to cover more people. Before 1988, Federal laws mandated participation for mothers with children older than six -- and it was a pretty weak mandate; now it's mothers with children over three -- or even younger, if the mother is a teen. FSA also places new stress on education and

training, as opposed to the quicker job search and community work experience approaches that states once relied on in welfare-to-work programs. Perhaps most important, under FSA the federal government for the first time will match state dollars for child care while mothers are in JOBS activities on an open-ended entitlement basis, and most parents are entitled to child care and Medicaid subsidies for a year after they leave work for welfare.

My foundation, the Foundation for Child Development, has been interested in the Family Support Act and its JOBS programs ever since FSA was passed. Out of that interest has come a number of grants to organizations concerned with the law plus our own thinking and writing. Early in 1992, we published this report, Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, and much of what I'm going to say today is based on Pathways, which I hope you have a chance to read.

The main point of Pathways is that for a long time, this country has operated two separate tracks of services for low-income families. Welfare-to-work programs try to improve parents' employment prospects, but typically have paid little attention to children. Meanwhile, many excellent programs for parents and children, such as grassroots family support programs, have not placed a heavy emphasis on preparing parents for work. It seems to us that what would be preferable is what we call two-generation intereventions -- simultaneously providing welfare-to-work services for parents and supports to help children grow up healthy and ready to learn. Under that scenario, you don't have a

parent moving ahead on employment and training, while little or nothing is done to see how the children are doing -- whether they're healthy, whether they'll be ready for school. Conversely, you don't have a child in an excellent child care program or even the mother in a fine parenting education workshop but no systematic effort to be sure that mother or father has a high school equivalency or is being helped to find a decent job. The two-generation strategy says that we make sure the family is moving ahead on both fronts. To be as clear as possible about what this means, Pathways spells out six elements of an ideal two-generation intervention. I've listed them on a handout and I'll just run through them with you: assessment of child and family needs, high quality child care and early childhood education, services to support parenting, preventive health care, education and training services leading to employment at a living wage, and family case management. Now, if you think about it, there are many ways in which a JOBS welfare-to-work program can serve as a jumping-off-point for helping families get this package of services.

First, JOBS subsidizes child care. Welfare-to-work programs, though, have often treated child care as secondary, a way to help the mother work, rather than an intervention in its own right. We know the child in a welfare family should be first in line for Head Start and other high quality early childhood programs. Yet just because that child comes through the door of the employment program, the decision about where he or she gets care is typically relegated to concerns about convenience and

cost. That doesn't have to be, though, JOBS can pay attention to the quality of care children are getting. For example, the Baltimore JOBS program uses a highly respected local child care resource and referral agency to help JOBS participants find good child care. The resource and referral agency proudly says it now offers welfare parents the same calibre of services provided to corporate clients.

Another feature of JOBS that can be conducive to two-generation programming: JOBS requires an assessment and permits case management of participants. Of course, these activities can focus only on employment-related issues for the mother or they can be exapnded to cover the entire family. For example, the Hawaii JOBS program has a team of professionals -- a nurse, a social worker, and an employment counselor -- who fully assess the family's strengths and any problems, from family violence to developmental delays in children to their school problems, that could get in the way of the effort to achieve self-sufficiency. Then the Hawaii JOBS program provides case management to try to solve the problems.

Besides assessment, case management, and child care, JOBS, of course, provides employability services, and those can be services aimed not just on getting someone off welfare in the short run but on helping the family become economically self-sufficient -- that's the fifth element on our list of ingredients. (I'm not saying that JOBS alone can always help families to the point where they earn a living wage; we probably need other income supports like the earned income tax credit or

child support assurance, but serious employment and training services obviously have a role to play in helping families escape welfare.)

Now, besides making the most of the core services of JOBS -- employment and training, child care, assessment, and case management -- JOBS program managers can, at their discretion, build all kinds of family-oriented activities into JOBS or hook JOBS up to other programs that provide those activities. For example, the weeklong JOBS orientation in Tampa brings in the Medicaid staff to do a very popular session on family health care that introduces JOBS participants to the EPSDT program, the Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program that is supposed to be offered all children on welfare for both screens and treatment. Or, another example of JOBS reaching out to other systems, the Denver JOBS program cross-enrolls some participants in the local CCDP, the federally funded Comprehensive Child Development Program, that provides home visiting, health care, and high quality early childhood education to participating families.

The innovative programs I've just mentioned are described in Pathways. We found them in the course of doing a scan, using telephone interviews, consultations with experts, and site visits, all focused on the question of what really exists that fits the vision of two-generation programming. You won't be surprised to hear that nowhere did we find our ideal -- a fully developed two-generation model with all six elements in place. But what we did find were a number of promising examples of

programs working together to create pieces of the two-generation model. Eight of those programs, including the Philadelphia JOBS/Head Start connection we're going to hear about today, are given full-scale profiles in Pathways. In addition to the examples I've already mentioned, the report describes how a welfare office in Illinois takes a problem-solving approach to providing child care to JOBS participants. Rather than sitting back and seeing how many people ask for child care, the office surveyed clients to see what they needed, produced a video on choosing good care, and mounted an active campaign to get more people to apply for the subsidy available to them after they leave welfare for work. Pathways also profiles how the Lexington, Kentucky JOBS program guides recipients to three special comprehensive family service programs. And the report profiles how the Portland, Oregon JOBS program takes advantage of an excellent school-based teen parent program to provide an unusually full array of services to teen parents and their children. So instead of just getting the basic JOBS treatment -- a mandate to return to school and a child care subsidy -- JOBS is able to offer these teens a program that really cares about them and their kids. Over and over again, we found that it was this reaching out from the welfare system to other systems that was important. It goes without saying that it's exceedingly difficult to put together these kinds of innovative programs in the current fiscal environment. I brought along a copy of an earlier report written by Olivia Golden when she was at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government that I think should interest you. Like

Pathways, it focuses on using the welfare system to help children. Olivia looked at some innovations used by the welfare system to help families that mostly took place before FSA was in operation and concluded that using the welfare system in this way was "difficult but not impossible." That checks out with our conclusions from Pathways. But against the odds, creative program managers like Susan, Willa, and others are trying to make the most of opportunities in FSA to help children and families. And if child advocates become familiar with their local JOBS programs, they can help them identify those opportunities and facilitate their use. In the end, even though it's not in the headlines, that may be the really important welfare reform story.